

THE EISENHOWER LIBRARY



3 1151 02745 1313

ANTI-SLAVERY REPORTER.

No. 84.]

JULY 18, 1831.

[Vol. iv. No. 12.]

PROTECTOR'S OF SLAVES REPORTS.—I. DEMERARA.—*Observations of Secretary of State; Complaints of Slaves, cases of Rosey, George, James, Mrs. Lowe's Slaves, Acouba, and Fanny; unjust detention of Slaves in bondage; arbitrary domestic inflictions; marriage; manumissions; wages of Sunday labour.*

In our last number we promised our readers some analysis of the official Reports printed by the House of Commons, which had been transmitted to the Colonial office, by the officers appointed by His Majesty, in the several Crown Colonies, under the title of Protectors, to watch over the interests of the slaves and to guard them from oppression and wrong. They are six in number, viz.:—1st. Demerara; 2nd. Berbice; 3rd. Trinidad; 4th. St. Lucia; 5th. Cape of Good Hope; 6th. Mauritius. We shall take them in their order.

1. Demerara.

We have often longed to be admitted to a full view of the interior economy of Demerara plantations. The horrific revelations of the Fiscal of Berbice, in 1825, served to sharpen our curiosity, which was still further excited by the apparent reluctance of the public functionaries in the adjoining Colony to disclose the secrets of the prison-house, and thus to open the eyes of the public, and even of Government itself, to the real condition of its slave population. The appointment of a Protector of slaves, in Demerara, bound to make periodical returns of all matters incident to his office, led us to hope for a full elucidation of their state. But his early reports were of the most meagre and unsatisfactory description, as we have already shewn. (See vol. ii. No. 43, p. 355; and vol. iii. No. 54, p. 142; and No. 66, p. 386.) Still enough was necessarily told to excite suspicions that the flattering generalities conveyed by the Protector respecting the contented appearance and happy state of the slaves of Demerara, could not be perfectly consistent, at least according to our European notions of happiness and content, with some broad facts of the case. The punishments, for example, of a single year, inflicted on this happy peasantry, when they came to be added up, amounted to about 20,500, the whole number of plantation slaves—men, women and children, being under 62,000. We learn, too, from the new law of Demerara, so much vaunted by the *forty-one* authors of the West India Manifesto, that the legal weekly sustenance of each adult labourer is fixed at what is equivalent to two pounds of herrings and eight pounds of raw flour, and the yearly amount of clothing is *one*

hat, *one* shirt, *one* jacket, and *one* pair of trowsers, for the men; and *one* hat, *one* gown, *one* shift, and *one* petticoat, for the women;—of which quantities, boys and girls of fifteen years of age and under, are allowed two thirds, and boys and girls of ten years and under, one half. How the planters contrive to halve the hat, the trowsers, or the petticoat, we do not pretend to guess. Still, in the teeth of these facts;—of this scanty food and scanty clothing,—and of these 20,000 inflictions of the whip or the stocks,—we are gravely assured by the Protector, that he “cannot refrain from remarking on the *contented* appearance of the negroes, (of Demerara) and that from his opportunities of judging, they generally have every reason to be so.”

In addition to these inconsistencies, on looking into the Reports of the Protector, there appeared an absence of all details respecting the nature and the issue of any complaints made to him by the slaves of maltreatment by their owners or managers. It was deemed necessary, therefore, to call for “Copies of the proceedings and decisions in each case of complaint between masters and slaves, which came before him, whether the proceedings may have terminated before the Protector himself, or may have been referred to Colonial magistrates, or other public officers or courts.” As a compliance with this call, we have now placed before us a detail of the transactions of this description, which occurred in Demerara during a single year, namely, from the 1st of May, 1829, to the 30th of April, 1830. But on the 1st of May, 1829, the Protector, Col. Young, had already been for three years in the execution of his important functions, and yet of the similar transactions of those three years, no details are given, nor is any reason assigned for their being withheld. Certainly if they shall prove to be as rich in valuable information as the details, now before us, of the complaints and the results of those complaints which were preferred to Col. Young during the fourth year of his administration, it would be highly expedient that they also should see the light. There seems no adequate cause for permitting the proceedings of the Protector, during the three years which preceded the 1st of May, to sink into oblivion, while those of the year following that date are given to the public. Even if an objection should be raised to the expence of printing them, there can be no objection made to their rigid examination, either by a committee or in some other way. It would seem to be unjust to the slave population of Demerara, if, after having seen the present specimen of their general condition, and their sad destitution of legal protection, measures were not taken to investigate the transactions of the first three years, as well as those of the fourth, of Colonel Young's protectorate.

The omission to which we have now adverted had attracted the notice of Sir George Murray; and in a despatch of the 2nd September, 1829, he called upon the Protector to supply it, remarking at the same time, that it had been stated by the Protector, that the complaints of slaves had not been numerous.—“Unfortunately, however,” he adds, “the same statement cannot be made respecting the number of punishments. They amount to the extraordinary number of 10,207, during one half year, upon a population of 61,626. The

infrequency of complaints, under such circumstances, must either imply a great consciousness of criminality on the part of the slave, or some distrust of their prospect of redress for any injuries they may have received. — In either case the result is much to be lamented.”

In consequence of this mandate of Sir George Murray, and of the subsequent Order of the House of Commons, we have now before us the complaints of the slaves of Demerara, for a single year, those being still withheld which had been made and disposed of previously, that is to say, prior to May, 1829. The impression produced on the minds both of Sir G. Murray and Lord Goderich, by this too tardy developement of the nature and result of those complaints, as given in the Protector's Report of his transactions for the first half of that period, namely, from the 1st of May to the 31st of October, 1829, may be collected from the following passages in a despatch of the Secretary of State, of the 30th of November, 1829, a despatch which seems to have been drawn up by Sir George Murray, though signed by Lord Goderich. After a variety of striking and judicious observations on the unsatisfactory nature of many of the Protector's decisions, the Secretary of State thus concludes his despatch:—“These observations are far from being the whole which the Record of the proceedings of the Protector, in the complaints of slaves, has suggested.” (He had before said, in allusion to them, that “the protection afforded by such proceedings as these, must be all but nugatory.”) “I avoid adding to the length of this despatch, by the repetition of remarks, which, though specially applicable to some cases selected for comment, may be justly used to characterise the proceedings generally.” (We shall quote, hereafter, some of those generally characteristic remarks.) “The witnesses examined are in general few, and they are not those from whom the most impartial testimony was to be expected. Points essential to a correct understanding, remain without elucidation. There is no appearance of assistance or advice, or indeed of opportunity, having been afforded to the slaves, to substantiate their allegations; and even when apparently substantiated, it is in very few instances that the claims of justice, and the provisions of the law, seem to have been satisfied in the result.

“On a review of the general character of the proceedings, if I am compelled to comment upon them with severity, I am not the less anxious that my comments should be understood as having reference to Colonel Young, solely in his quality of Protector. The office is an extremely arduous one, and very peculiar qualifications are required for it. I would much rather attribute Colonel Young's decisions, in many of the cases which have come before him, to the want of a habit of weighing evidence, and of the penetration which such a habit generates, than to the want of an equitable mind. But from whatever cause the inefficiency proceeds, and whatever be the value which might attach to the services of Colonel Young in other situations, I cannot consent that he should continue in the office of Protector, whilst I remain under the conviction of his unfitness for it, to which his recent proceedings have led me. Under such an administration of the slave ordinance, as these proceedings appear to

evinced, I cannot, indeed, but entertain the most serious doubts whether in the many important provisions depending for their execution upon the Protector, that ordinance be not almost devoid of practical effect.* Some of the details to which it has been my painful duty to advert in this despatch, present sufficient indications of the responsibility which I should assume, were I not to require either that these doubts be forthwith removed, or that the office of Protector be intrusted to other hands. You will, therefore, grant the Protector six months leave of absence, that he may return to this country to explain his conduct; and until a final decision be taken as to his resumption of the office, you will make the best selection in your power of a person to execute the duties provisionally.

"You must allow me, in conclusion, to advert to the despatches from yourself, which have accompanied the Protectors' reports. These despatches have in general notified their transmission, and have contained little or no comment upon them. Sensible as I am of the vigour and penetration with which every inquiry is pursued which it devolves upon yourself personally to conduct, I cannot suppose that the imperfections of those conducted by the Protector would have escaped your observation, had you conceived yourself called upon to revise them. I am thus induced to believe that you have considered such a revision as not intended to constitute any part of a Governor's duty, I take this occasion, therefore, to request as one of the most important functions of your government, the exercise of such a superintendence as shall ensure the proper execution of the office of Protector of slaves. Without the most watchful performance of this duty, it is not to be hoped, that the law for bettering the condition of the slaves will be effectually administered. It is obvious that an immediate revision by the Governor, followed by a prompt resumption of imperfect investigations, must obviate many evils which are beyond the reach of remedy after such a lapse of time as must unavoidably intervene before the final revision by the Secretary of State."

We trust that a copy of this well timed admonition has been sent to every governor of a slave colony within the dominions of the crown.

It would be impossible to enter very fully and particularly into the various complaints which are contained in the Protector's report, or are adverted to in the despatch of the Secretary of State, as occurring during the twelve months, from 1st May, 1829 to 30th April, 1830. They amount to above 100, and occupy upwards of 130 closely printed folio pages. All we can hope to do is to give a fair sample of them, and for that purpose we shall select a few which will convey to our readers a tolerably correct idea of the rest.

1. *Case of Rosey*, (No. 5, p. 48.)

May, 1829, appeared *Rosey*; says, she belongs to Plantation Grove, on the East coast; says, that on Tuesday last, the 12th of May, she got a pain in her bowels while at work in the field; that

* This would probably have appeared three years sooner, had the returns of the complaints of slaves and their results, been regularly made.

she lay down, and that Mr. Henry Chapman, the manager, saw her and asked, what ailed her? She told him; but he ordered her to go on with her work, and struck her with a small stick and then with his fist, which knocked her down. He then had her hands tied behind her and sent her home, and kept her in the stocks three days and three nights, and kept her sucking child from her during that time, and that in consequence of her child not being given her to give it suck, her breasts swelled very much. The doctor saw her and gave her some medicine for the bowel complaint. The manager afterwards wanted to confine her at night, but she hid herself. She left the estate last night, but did not ask for a pass.

The Protector summoned Mr. H. Chapman to appear and sent complainant to gaol. On the 23rd both attended at the office.

Mr. Chapman (the party accused) admitted, that he came to the field and saw the woman sitting down. On asking what was the matter, she would give no answer. He gave her a slap in the face in consequence of her great impertinence. She was not confined in the stocks, but in one of the rooms of the hospital; her child is sixteen months old, and had previously been in the yaws house: it had been thought fit to be weaned before it was sent thither with the yaws.

To this verbal statement he added a written statement of his overseer to the effect of confirming all *he* himself had said, and denying his having struck her with a stick, or knocked her down; and adding that she and her husband were always dissatisfied and disaffected, and that Mr. Chapman had always passed over their misconduct.

The result of this investigation is thus given by the Protector. "Complaint dismissed."

"On this case," says the Secretary of State, "I must make a remark, which might be applied to a majority of these investigations, that the only parties examined are those from whom the truth is least likely to be elicited, the party complaining, and the party against whom the complaint is brought. It does not appear to be denied, however, in this case that the woman who complains was sick, and that she was struck by the manager. The degree of violence used is disputed; and this is no doubt a point which will always be disputed, and cannot be ascertained; and the law is therefore more necessary to be enforced which forbids that a woman should be struck at all. The woman's allegation that she was confined *in the stocks* is disputed, but it is not denied that she was confined three days and nights; and that during this confinement an infant at the breast was not admitted to her. I am unable to discover on what ground the Protector dismissed the complaint."

2. Case of George. (No. 14, p. 58.)

This case will be sufficiently understood by transcribing the substance of the comment of the Secretary of State. The complaint, No. 14, is that of *George* against Mr. Thierens, for detaining him in slavery, he being free from birth. His statement is, "that his mother, Laura, was the daughter of the Indian woman Urina, of the Harno tribe; that his father was a slave of Mr. Trotts, and head driver on

Plantation Laurencia where his mother lived, and was always considered a free woman; that after her death, which happened while George was a child, Mr. Trotts took him and his sister as slaves, his sister having now alive a son named Remy; that after Mr. Trotts died, they were retained in slavery by his wife, and at her death became the property of her nephew, Mr. Thierens, in whose possession they still are. George referred to two persons who can prove his descent from the free Indian woman Laura; and said, that five years ago they had claimed their liberty and were assisted in doing so by the Crown Advocate, Mr. Gordon, who told them to return to the estate, and at the end of six months they should be manumitted; but the promise had not been fulfilled."

Mr. Thierens maintained that the claim of George to freedom was unfounded; that he only thought of it when in liquor; that at all other times the whole family had declared themselves contented and satisfied with their lot, and had even disclaimed any pretensions to their freedom, and this before two witnesses who certified the same in writing, but without giving the names of the disclaiming slaves.

The Protector's decision on this case was "dismissed; the claim being withdrawn by the parties themselves, and acknowledged by them to be unfounded, and that it was only made whilst under the influence of spirituous liquors."

Upon these facts, the Secretary of State observes to the following effect, "It appears to me that this case has been disposed of in too summary a manner. The statement of alleged facts, on which the claims to freedom were founded, is distinct and specific. It is in no single particular disproved or even contradicted by the opposite party. Considering the presumable ignorance of the negroes, and the means of persuasion" (and it may be added of intimidation) "a master may be supposed to possess, the abandonment of their claims formerly may be accounted for without any necessary inference of invalidity. One of the principal motives for establishing a Protector of slaves is deduced from the apprehension that the slaves may not be capable of forming a just judgment of their own interests, or in a condition to act for themselves. But the two negroes, George and his sister, who are said to have disavowed their pretensions to freedom, are not the only persons whose freedom was in question. Remy, the child of the female, would be equally entitled to freedom if George's statement were substantiated. It was the duty of the Protector, therefore, in this case, to take every means for substantiating the statement, and obtaining the freedom which would be the result. If any who might be so made free should desire to remain with Mr. Thierens and work for him as they now do, it would, of course, be in their power to offer him their services. You will direct the Protector to resume this case, and also require from Mr. Gordon, the Crown advocate, a report upon it."—In the course of the inquiry, Mr. Thierens had intimated that those claimants of freedom would not be able to subsist by their own industry. The Secretary of State acutely remarks, that "any exercise of industry that can make a slave of value to his master must be over and above that which is necessary to procure his own subsistence."

3. *Case of James.* (No. 21, p. 63.)

This case, the Secretary of State remarks, “ exhibits evidence of an habitual violation of a most important provision of the slave ordinance; that namely which exempts the slave from labour on the Sunday; and yet it appears to have entirely escaped the notice of the Protector of slaves, whose only note upon the case is in two words at the end of the proceedings, ‘ Complaint dismissed.’ ”

James's story was to this effect: On Friday he had been throwing green megass, (the sugar cane after the juice had been expressed by grinding and which is used as fuel when dry) out of doors, the megass houses being full. On Saturday he was ordered to the field, leaving the green megass of the preceding day out of doors. His Saturday's task not having been finished he was ordered to finish it on Sunday morning before receiving his allowance. It occupied him till eleven o'clock. He was then obliged to put into the house the megass which had been left out on Friday, and which occupied him till six at night, when he went with the rest of the people to throw grass for the cattle. The driver, however, charged him with not having housed his full share of the megass, and ordered him to the stocks on Sunday night. He denied the charge and got away, and did not go to the stocks. On Monday, however, he was put into the stocks and next day was flogged. The complaint of James was for having been unjustly flogged, not for having been made to work all Sunday. Of this last circumstance the Protector took no notice and dismissed the complaint of injustice as unproved. “ But this point,” observes the Secretary of State, “ is of far less consequence than the practice here incidentally disclosed ” by a transaction “ which shows that negroes are considered punishable for not having completed, on the Sunday, tasks which they have been either unwilling or unable to perform on previous days.” Having shown that this fact stands on the clear and unquestioned evidence of two drivers as well as of James himself, and is not denied by the manager, the Secretary of State remarks in conclusion, “ It is obvious that if this practice be suffered to prevail with impunity any quantity of labour may be exacted from the slave on Sunday by nominally assigning it to the Saturday. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that either under the existing law, or by a supplementary enactment (if such be required) this practice be totally and effectually put down. I cannot close without calling your attention to the negligence of the administration of the slave ordinance, by which such a system has been allowed to escape notice, although by the examinations consequent on this complaint, it had been distinctly brought within the view of the Protector.”

4. *Case of the slaves of Mary Lowe.* (No. 33, p. 72.)

The facts established in evidence in this case were to the following effect: Mrs. Lowe, of lot No. 17, Essequibo (called Westbury,) was much addicted to drunkenness: she was also guilty of great cruelties to her slaves. In February 1829, she cut the wrist of her female slave *Present's* right hand with a broken cup, and afterwards unmercifully

beat her for going to a neighbouring estate to get it dressed: the hand being still so bad that it was likely she would never have the use of it again. In June 1829, she tied up a little girl called *Elvira*, by both her hands to the beam of the gallery, from eight a. m. to one p. m. and flogged her unmercifully while thus suspended. The girl fainted three times before she was cut down, and her hands still bear the marks of it, and her fingers are contracted in consequence. Some time before, she tied up a little boy called *Shigh* in a similar manner, from nine a. m. to six p. m. and the boy lost the use of his hands for some days. She had repeatedly taken a female child of Present's, about seven months old, by the neck like a kitten, and thrown her a distance of two or three yards on the floor, and over the gallery, to the hazard of the child's life. She often chased her slaves with a knife to stab them, and they only escaped by running out of the way. For years she had not given her slaves their allowance of clothing or food. She had now (21st Aug. 1829,) been in town for several weeks, and her domestics, four in number, have had nothing to live upon since she had been from home, but the fish they might catch in the trenches, or what they might get from neighbours. The slaves are prevented from complaining to the Protector, of the cruelty and bad treatment they receive from Mrs. Lowe, by the influence of her family over them. A neighbour of her's, a Mr. Mackintosh, testified further that her cruelties had increased so much of late, as to call for interference. Having no outbuildings, the negroes slept in her own house, and she had been in the habit, in rainy weather, of driving them out of the house, some being infants, in the middle of the night, to wander about for refuge.

All that was done by the Protector in this case, was, to get the Court of Justice to take, from Mary Lowe, the charge of the slaves, and to place them under a Curator.

The comments of the Secretary of State on this case are to the following effect. "I have perused the proceedings with extreme pain, and I am compelled to express my most serious displeasure at their result. The woman complained against, Mary Lowe, was unable to bring forward a single witness to negative any of the circumstances proved against her on the evidence of relatives and others. It is proved that she was an habitual drunkard, and her slaves appear to have been continually suffering from her cruelty and violence, and sometimes in imminent danger of their lives." "Complaints were made to the Assistant Protector, Mr. McPherson, but he always desired the slaves to go away, when they came to complain; and even when directed by the Protector to inquire into the case, the answer was, that 'for a great length of time back he had had no communication, directly or indirectly, with Mary Lowe, and he would certainly like to have no words with her.'" The Secretary of State then proceeds to consider whether there was any ground for attributing insanity, as this would form the only excuse, if it were true, for the Protector's conduct, and he comes to the conclusion that she exhibited no proof of any other mental alienation than excessive drunkenness might be expected to produce. "But mere drunkenness," he adds, "cannot be

admitted as any plea to protect this woman from the punishment due to her crimes. Nothing but distinct evidence of contemporaneous insanity could justify the exemption of such an offender from the severest punishment which the law awards upon conviction of such offences: and the proof of insanity which might justify such an exemption, would equally justify, and indeed render imperatively necessary her confinement for life as a criminal lunatic. All that has been done in this case is to take away from Mary Lowe the care of her slaves, and place them in the hands of a Curator. I confess myself totally at a loss to account for the appearance of insensibility to the claims of justice which is presented by this result. The omission to bring this woman to trial is grounded on a mere conjectural inference which is not supported by even a single allegation of her having been deranged at the time when the crimes were committed." "You will lose no time in causing any steps which may be consistent with the law of the Colony, to be taken for prosecuting Mary Lowe. You will also institute the strictest inquiry into the conduct of the Assistant Protector, Mr. M'Pherson, who is said to have refused to receive the complaints of Mary Lowe's slaves,"—"and unless he explain his conduct to you in a satisfactory manner, you will supersede him without further reference to me."

5. Case of Acouba. (No. 45. p. 91.)

Acouba, a woman sickly and full of scrofulous sores, belonging to Mr. Sills, stated, that her master was too bad. He beat her with a stick, on Friday and on Saturday. Having lost some money he said she must find it, and not finding it, she was put into the stocks in order to be taken to gaol.—Mr. Sills said, he had merely *touched* her with a whip. The surgeon of the gaol certified that she was afflicted with severe ulceration of the right cheek, and that her right eye was in a very high state of inflammation, and that without great care she would lose it. The only result of this case was, that Mr. Sills engaged to have her properly attended to in her own house, stating that the expense of keeping her in the gaol hospital was too much for him to pay, and she was then delivered up to him with a direction to comply strictly with his engagement. "This same woman Acouba," observes the Secretary of State, had about seven weeks before "in her own behalf, and that of her brother afflicted like herself with sores, and that of her husband also diseased, complained of being kicked and beaten by Mr. Sills, and of no medical attendance being afforded them. The issue of that case was, that 'the Protector having found the statements of the complainants as to insufficiency of food and allowance to be incorrect,' (though how they were found to be so does not appear, unless by the mere denial of Mr. Sills,) 'dismissed the complaint, directing Mr. Sills to provide them with such medical attendance and care, as they stood in need of.' The inefficacy of this direction," the Secretary of State goes on to observe, "might have taught the Protector that something more was required than a repetition of it. And if the beating of the sick woman was denied in the former case, the Protector cannot have attached any weight to the

denial in the latter, which was accompanied with an admission that he had 'merely touched her with a whip.' The protection afforded by such proceedings as these," the Secretary of State adds, "must be all but nugatory."

6. *Case of Fanny.* (p. 149.)

The complaint of Fanny was, that she had been tied, both hands and feet, laid down and flogged with a horsewhip by order of her mistress, for not having found and brought back a boy who had run away, and in search of whom she had been sent. The complaint was corroborated by two witnesses, from whose evidence, and the admission of the accused, it further appeared, that the complainant had been put in the stocks for two days and two nights before the flogging; and that both these punishments were for the same offence, which was another violation of the law. The owner did not deny that she had caused the woman to be flogged, and only alleged that the punishment had been slight, and that the slave had not been tied, in which latter circumstance she was contradicted by the woman she had employed to inflict the punishment; yet the only result of this case is, that the Protector not thinking it expedient to institute a prosecution, cautions the owner not to repeat the offence. "I am at a loss to discover," says the Secretary of State, "by what authority the Protector thought himself empowered to decline instituting the prosecution." He says, "the chief object of the complaint was, to prevent a repetition of similar punishment on the complainant, who stated *that* to be *her* object in preferring it. Even supposing this to have been the only desire of the complainant, the duty of the Protector was not only, or mainly, to satisfy the complainant, but to vindicate the law, and to shew that it could not be broken with impunity. The allegation that the flogging was slight, rests merely on the evidence of her who ordered, and her who inflicted it. You will therefore direct the Protector to reconsider the case with a view to the prosecution of the defendant; and you will caution him against assuming in future an authority to remit the exaction of fines incurred by a contravention of the Slave Ordinance."

Cases occur frequently of persons held in slavery, though freed by the will of their owners. The Secretary of State comments upon them with just severity, and desires that legal provision may forthwith be made, to prevent such flagrant injustice in future.

But it would be endless to go over the whole of the black catalogue before us. We can only give, as we have said, a sample of them, one in each twenty or twenty-five cases, occurring in a single year, in Demerara, under all the discouragements which exist there to prevent slaves from complaining against their owners; for into the hands of those owners they are always returned, with the likelihood of experiencing treatment still more vexatious and annoying, though perhaps less directly illegal than what had led to the complaints. And this is a sample of only one year of the Protector's administration. If the remaining three years should prove equally fruitful of complaints of the same kind, and of complaints attended with similar results, what

a fearful spectacle of cruelty and wrong would it not exhibit to the view of the British public ; and all this over and above the eighteen or nineteen or twenty thousand domestic inflictions of the whip or of the stocks, which occur yearly, at the mere arbitrary pleasure of the 300 or 320 owners or managers of plantations, who, in this boasted land of content and enjoyment, have the uncontrolled power, within certain limits, and within those limits without the slightest responsibility, of punishing their fellows with stripes and imprisonment. And for what description of crime are they thus permitted to punish them? We may form some idea of this from the following computation of the inflictions of two whole years, as contained in the returns of the Protector, viz:—For stealing sugar canes, plantains, &c. (the effect probably of the scanty food allowed by their masters,) yearly inflictions to the extent of about 1,000.—For insubordination ; insolence ; stubbornness ; disobedience ; absconding and skulking ; false pretences of sickness ; not being at work in time ; loss of labour by drunkenness ; not finishing tasks ; laziness ; neglect of duties ; carelessness, &c. yearly inflictions to the extent of 16,500 ; the remaining yearly inflictions being made up of quarrelling and fighting with each other ; infidelity to husbands ; seducing wives ; dancing without leave on Sundays ; telling lies ; neglecting sores, &c. to the extent of about 1,200 cases.

The average number of stripes inflicted upon the male culprits, is stated to be between nineteen and twenty. Reckoning the males punished in a year, on the average, at about 12,000, we have an amount of 240,000 lashes arbitrarily inflicted in this single colony in the course of a year, by about 300 or 320 owners or managers, chiefly managers, the owners being mostly absent.

The exact returns of punishments, for the first four half years, viz.: from Jan. 1, 1828, to Dec. 31, 1829, are as follows:—

Date.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Jan. 1, to June 30, 1828,	6,092	3,962	10,054
July 1, to Dec. 31, 1828,	6,542	3,665	10,207
Jan. 1, to June 30, 1829,	5,666	3,044	8,710
July 1, to Dec. 31, 1829,	5,682	2,967	8,649
Total on two years,	23,982	13,638	37,620

Among the punishments we observe some of portentous moment. In the first half year 62 drivers are punished for neglecting their duty, and allowing the gang to be idle ; in the second, 83 ; in the third, 49 ; in the fourth, 68.—What a tremendous influence must these applications to the driver's sensibility of pain, exert on the fears of the gang under him, in stimulating them to labour !

In the last half year of the above series the Protector has given us a list of the plantations, amounting to 305, and having a population of 59,492 slaves, on which the above 8,649 punishments had been inflicted in the course of six months. The returns from some of the estates are quite appalling. On the following estates, with the annexed population, there have been in six months the number of punishments also annexed, viz:—

<i>Plantation.</i>	<i>Manager.</i>	<i>Population.</i>	<i>Punishments.</i>
Tenezferme	Gordon	59	52
Ostend	Parke	24	21
Mes Delices	Tighe	13	11*
La Bonne Intention	Danket	290	129
Lusignan	Laud	439	188
Mon Repos	Stewart	464	292
New Tyle	Hood	95	57
Covent Garden	Dunkin	78	57
Arcadia	Dunkin	88	30
Little Diamond	Loof	240	100
Task gang	Macpherson	45	63
La Penitence	Rush	315	148
Le Repentir	Rush	129	74
Huis l'Diaren	Beatty	276	149
Velvoorden	Van Eeden	149	72
Maryville	Bayne	192	83
Amsterdam	Frankland	278	64
Hermitage	Roberts	107	35
Endeavour	Jeffery	218	68
Claremont	Marshall	176	57
Hoop en Vries	Read	171	71
Retrieve	Simion	186	56
Belfield	Easton	23	11
Drill	Gardner	103	38
Zealand	Morris	9	10
Walton Hall	Kean	325	94
Sparta	M. Lennan	278	71
Byadeny	Couchman	43	21
Woodcutting	Frazer	46	23
Sans Souci	Reid	30	17
Grove	Chapman	125	29
Annandale	Nicholson	249	53
Ver Feniging	Douglas	118	29
Groenveld	Kleyn	215	181
Anna Catharina	Schultz	266	114
Vreed en Hoop	Grant	550	157
Nouvelle Flandre	Murray	222	63
Potosi	Reid	108	31
Klein Poudereyen	Vollerelde	338	185
Vreedistin	Jellicoe	222	79
Reenestein	Leshe	105	56
Maria's Lodge	McDonald	99	34

We observe that in the case of Mary Lowe, the owner of Westbury, there is not only no return of punishments, but her property stands (p. 5.) as one of those honourably distinguished as being exempt from punishment. Now when we look back to p. 340 of this Reporter, and read the authentic account there given, of this woman's systematic cruelties towards her slaves, we are at a loss to reconcile it

* And yet this property of "Mes Delices," with precisely the same number of slaves, stands, by some accident, among the plantations exempt from punishment, though eleven punishments appear to have been inflicted on the thirteen slaves belonging to it in the last half year.

with the fact of this exemption. We must suppose that either the return sworn to by her overseer of the absence of all punishment, was a false one, or that there is that kind of irregularity and uncertainty in these returns which diminishes greatly their value. We can hardly doubt that during the two years for which we have the returns before us, the punishments inflicted by Mary Lowe must have been many and severe. Otherwise the extreme measure of judicially depriving her of all further control over her slaves, on account of her continued cruelties, would hardly have been resorted to. And if there be any ground for such a suspicion in this case, what confidence can be entertained that the returns, generally, do not fall short of the truth in their exhibition of the number of punishments actually inflicted. There is no danger of exaggeration in the contrary direction.—It is only by tracing such manifest though apparently trivial errors to their source, that we can succeed in discovering and correcting irregularities of perhaps far more extensive prevalence.

The number of settlements or gangs stated to have been exempt from all punishment, during the above period, amounts to from 40 to 48, and the slaves attached to them, to from 1,020 to 1,100, the particular settlements not being always the same. The result is that settlements, containing about a sixtieth part of the plantation slaves, or a seventieth part of the whole slave population of the Colony, are exempt in each half year from punishment. This is something, though not much, for which to be thankful.

Our estimate of the value of this list of exemptions, we must confess, has been greatly lowered by the two discoveries we have just made; one that the settlement of "Mes Delices," with its thirteen slaves, which stands among the exemptions, appears in another return with eleven instances of punishment on these thirteen slaves in six months; the other that Mary Lowe, distinguished above others for her cruelties, should appear in this list, as if her seventeen slaves had never been visited with the slightest infliction. Who can tell how far this inaccuracy may extend; or whether the apparent immunity of the slaves may not, in this and in many other cases of even a more hopeful kind, to which we are about to advert, be more an effect of the perjury than of the humanity of the master or manager. How is it possible to divest ourselves of such a painful suspicion in the case of persons capable of perpetrating such outrages on their fellow-creatures, as we are continually called to witness? Truly there is no cure to be found for the evils of slavery but in its extinction.

There appear also in this list, 21 plantations out of 305, in which the number of punishments has been comparatively small, not more than three per cent. in the half year. These are

<i>Plantation.</i>	<i>Manager.</i>	<i>Population.</i>	<i>Punishments.</i>
Mundenburgh	Lindsay	47	1
Carpenter gang	Smith	42	1
Bel Air	Carpenter	215	5
Montrose	Simpson	292	7
Belle Plaine	Whitehead	293	7
Houston	Russell	857	14

<i>Plantation.</i>	<i>Manager.</i>	<i>Population.</i>	<i>Punishments.</i>
Providence	Read	651	15
Blenheim	Cox	337	7
Richmond Hill	Hart	320	9
Endeavour	Macfarquhar	130	2
Zorg	Bishop	285	8
Golden Fleece	Bruton	444	2
Abram's Zuil	Ross	116	3
Devonshire Castle	Banbury	486	10
Perth	Macpherson	128	2
Caledonia	Smith	109	3
Essex	Edwards	220	4
Helena	McLaren	371	5
Windsor Forest	McNeil	491	11
La Grange	Webster	282	6
Woodcutter	Mathison	118	3

Still we cannot forget that Mary Lowe was returned as having indicted no punishment at all upon her slaves.

The number of marriages reported to have taken place from the 1st of July, 1828, to the 1st of May, 1830, is 129.

The number of slaves certified as competent witnesses from the 1st of July, 1828, to the 30th of June, 1829, is 172.

The number of manumissions from the 1st of November, 1828, to the 1st of May, 1830, appears to be 354.*

We observe, that in a great many instances of manumissions, and even in many cases which would seem wholly to preclude the necessity for such an exaction, the parties manumitted are obliged to give security for not becoming burdensome to the Colony. This security is exacted, in at least fifty cases, from persons who are stated to have been free from their birth; but who are now for the first time put into the legal possession of their freedom, by being registered as free. But it does seem a great injustice to impose the performance of so onerous a condition on persons who appear to have been free born, before *that* liberty, which has always been their right, shall be legally secured to them. So, in many other cases of slaves who have manumitted themselves or their children by the fruit of their own industry; and in one case of a daughter who paid the price of her mother's redemption; as well as in many cases of manumission by deed of gift; security of the same kind is, as it appears to us, most unreasonably exacted from the parties. We think it would be well if the Protector were made to specify his reasons in every case for interposing so very serious an obstacle in the way of manumissions. Some excellent remarks of Earl Bathurst on this subject will be found in a letter to Sir Ralph Woodford, contained in the papers laid before Parliament by His Majesty's command in 1825; in which he gives a clear opinion against the exaction of bonds of maintenance in most of the cases in which they seem to have been required in Demerara. We recommend that despatch to the consideration of all Protectors.

* We do not pretend to explain the causes of the discrepancies in the different dates of these returns.

At the close of Col. Young's latest report is inserted the copy of an advertisement of his in the Gazette to the following effect:—

“NOTICE. “Office of Protector of Slaves, May 15, 1830.

“In obedience to the orders contained in the fourth clause of the Lieutenant Governor's proclamation of the 29th of April, 1830, I hereby fix

“One bit ($4\frac{1}{4}d$ sterling) per hour for potting sugar.

“One bit (ditto.) per hour for turning or drying coffee or cotton.

“Picking a basket of coffee weighing 70lbs. gross, three bits ($1s. 0\frac{1}{4}d$. sterling.)

“Picking a basket of cotton weighing 30lb. gross, three bits (ditto.)

“To be the lowest rate of wages for labour on Sunday in the above works.

“(Signed) A. W. YOUNG, Protector of Slaves.”

On this notice Lord Goderich remarks, “As the principle for fixing the rate of wages on Sunday was so fully explained in Sir G. Murray's despatch of the 2nd of Nov. 1829, I conclude that Colonel Young has followed the rule there laid down, in his present scale.”

Now it is quite impossible that any two things should be more widely at variance than this notice of the Protector and the principle laid down by Sir G. Murray in his despatch of the 2nd of Nov. 1829, respecting the wages to be allotted to the slave for Sunday labour; and as the matter is of the utmost importance to the poor slaves, we shall be excused, we trust, for going into it at some length.

On the 1st of May, 1827, Colonel Young communicated to government the following notice, on the subject of the wages of slaves for Sunday labour, as having been issued by him.

“Rate of wages fixed by the Protector for the labour of slaves in the picking of coffee or cotton, during the time allowed them by law.” (viz. Sunday.)

“Coffee two bits ($8\frac{1}{2}d$. sterling) for every basket of 10lb.

“Cotton one bit ($4\frac{1}{4}d$. sterling) for every basket of 10lb.

“N. B. Six baskets of coffee is the average labour per diem.

“(Signed) A. W. YOUNG, Protector of slaves.”

In commenting on this notice on its first appearance, (see our 2nd vol. No. 43, p. 357.) we were struck chiefly with the very unreasonable amount of the quantity of labour which Colonel Young assigned as an average task for a slave by the day, namely 60lbs. of coffee; and we then proved from the very best evidence, and which there has been no attempt to contradict, that it was double the fair and reasonable amount. If the Protector felt himself thus authorised to specify 60lbs. as the fair average of a day's labour, when it was proved that 30lbs. was the fair average task, it was obvious that he could not punish the planters for oppression, if, following his own scale, they were to exact from their slaves the larger instead of the smaller quantity. The Protector was therefore required to produce the grounds on which he had proceeded in stating that to pick 60lbs. of coffee was “the average labour,” (of course, a moderate task) for a slave “per diem.”

To this part of the case the Protector has given no answer. The

only point on which he attempts to defend himself (See Vol. iii. No. 66, p. 387,) is, his having fixed the wages so *low* as $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ for each basket of coffee of 10lbs. weight. He produces, indeed, the testimony of a planter, who states the proper price for picking a basket of coffee to be a guilder, 17*d.* sterling, being double what he had fixed; but then he excuses his reducing the price to $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ a basket, by the consideration of the relation in which the master who gives him food, clothing, &c. stands to the slave, who ought therefore to work for half the price that strangers might reasonably be expected to pay him.

We need not say that Sir G. Murray in his letter of the 2nd Nov. 1829, most decidedly repudiated such reasoning, and inculcated on the Protector the clear obligation of fixing, for the slave's Sunday, the rate of labour which would be given, at any time, to persons in a condition to make an independent contract. "Errors of this nature," he adds, (evidently adopted from the fallacious views communicated to him by the planters) "would, if repeated, abate that full confidence which it is necessary his Majesty's Government should repose" in the Protector.

And yet how very strange and utterly inexplicable, on any hypothesis we can frame, is the result to which all this discussion, and all this solemn admonition, have brought the Protector.

In May, 1827, he fixed the price of picking 10lb. of coffee at $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ sterling, being only half of what planters told him it was worth.

In May, 1830, he fixes the price of picking 70lb. of coffee at $4\frac{1}{4}d.$ sterling, being only half the rate which he fixed, on the former occasion, for picking a seventh part of that quantity, namely 10lb.

The price of picking 70lb. of coffee at the rate of May, 1827, instead of $4\frac{1}{4}d.$ would have been nearly 5*s.* and in the judgment of the respectable planter, whom Colonel Young consulted, nearly 10*s.* The unquestionable evidence adduced by Mr. Alexander Macdonnell, Secretary of the Demerara Committee, (See Vol. ii. No. 43, p. 358.) would make the picking of 70lb. of coffee the very maximum of two days' labour for an *able* negro, in "the most favourable circumstances," coffee being "plentiful;" and for this amount of labour the Protector now assigns $4\frac{1}{4}d.$ as a fair price, that is about 2*d.* for the slave's whole Sunday!

But it is endless attempting farther to unravel this tangled web. All we are sure of is, that not only has not the Protector succeeded in approximating to the principle laid down by Sir George Murray; but he has departed from it to an almost infinite distance. It will be for him to explain, what no one else can, by any possibility, explain, the reasons on which this last notice, so contradictory of all that went before it, has proceeded.

We have detained our readers too long, though, we hope, not unprofitably, with the single case of Demerara. We could have enlarged our extracts from the complaints of the slaves, so as to have still more fully illustrated the wretched circumstances of the slave population in that Colony; but we fear to fatigue our readers, and we are anxious to hasten on to the other reports still lying before us.

